

gests that their usefulness is at an end, that their lives are without influence, that their work does no good. Patience, brother, sister! Jesus sees and knows. See that your life is right, that your motives are right, that between you and Christ there is no cloud, then with patience stick to your service. So many Christians are of the fitful sort, full of energy one day, despondent and careless the next. God grant that we may be a church of whom Jesus looking down from the Father's throne and say, "I know * * * thy patience." And I would to God that every Christian was of the kind that would "let patience have her perfect work."

The last named virtue of this church at Thyatira was growth or profession in work and service, "thy last works are more than the first." She had not been satisfied with her first attainments. Her members had learned that the Christian life is a progress in knowledge and grace. When they came into the church they did not sit down and say, "Well, that is done. Now I'm all right for both time and eternity," and never grow from babes into full grown men and women in Christ Jesus. They did not forget Paul's exhortation to "go on unto perfection." They knew they were babes, but they did not desire to always remain such, but "desired the sincere milk of the word that they might grow thereby." How blessed must have been their church life, when such was the condition of life among the members! No wonder they were one of the seven churches which were chosen to represent the churches of all ages. This was the crowning characteristic in this church which Jesus loved,—profession in works. Here was a progressive church in a real sense. Let us emulate her blessed example. Let us progress, Brethren, in all things good and noble. In the matter of Missions, if we shall be a Thyatira, we must go on, spread out, seek to accomplish God's will in the matter of teaching a whole gospel to a whole world. In the matter of our Publishing House, the dead past, while yielding lessons which we shall do well to heed, must be left behind, a wider mission is opening to us thru the publication and distribution of a noble literature which shall teach the whole gospel.

As a church we must progress in the College affairs. Our record of sacrifice in the past is noble, but the church should support her better by sending her sons and daughters there for an education. Our people should remember her needs in a financial way by leaving to her a legacy which shall be teaching the young when they who shall have contributed it shall have long gone to their eternal reward.

In our mission work at home let our "last works be more than the first." "Let us go on into perfection," not killing congregation already established to establish others, but with sound judgment and patience steadily pushing on the founding of new churches as we are able under God.

But even against this church Christ had

one thing, "that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, and she teacheth and seduceth my servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols." The reference is to the same sin rebuked in some of the other churches,—the sin which was so like the hideous impurities of the Baal worship of Elijah's time that the leader of it in this church is called by the same name as the leader of the Baal worship in the kingdom of Israel, Jezebel. And this was even in the church. No better picture of the awful vices which the early church had to combat in the midst of a pagan civilization is to be found than this. Even within the church they had come those who carried with them the licentious practice of their former life and were even justifying their conduct on the plea of Christian liberty. Mark, that against these sins and sinners, the Lord Christ uses no mistakable terms. He rebukes in terms of terrible plainness. He calls the sins by their names and pronounces the inevitable results of such sin with no uncertain sound. No church can suffer such things. By so doing she involves herself. Sin must be rebuked. The church must stand as a continual protestant against the sins of the world. No question of expediency must be allowed to silence the church in the face of flagrant vices. And those churches and preachers who are keeping their peace against wrong in the hope of increasing their favor with men, can hardly claim to be Christ like. To them Jesus would send the word, "I have thus against thee."

Finally, notice Christ's reproof and encouragement. He pronounced the punishment of physical sickness upon this woman and her partners in sin, and death upon her children. She and the churches must know that sin is destructive. If they will not believe that testimony of Him who knows, they must learn it from the punishment of the sinner. It must be learned that every one will by the eternal laws of right and justice receive deserts according to his works.

The punishment of sin is not the arbitrary fiat of God, but the working of the beneficent laws of the universe. Sin is transgression of law. Punishment is the result of transgression of law. Hence for sin there must be suffering. But the faithful receive from him who warns the sinner, words of encouragement.

They are to hold fast that which they already have, and to him that overcometh and holdeth fast his words unto the end is given the promise that he shall have authority over the nations. He that doeth Christ's will is he that unceasingly has power with the world. No one has the power over men today as has the man Christ Jesus. And after him who has more than those who walked closest to him. Nay, even today whose influence is greatest, abides longest. Is it not his whose life is ordered according to the life of Jesus?

Here then, in the Lord's words to this church we have a revelation of the ascended

Christ's will concerning the churches. He commends with words of loving encouragement the characteristics which make for peace and holiness. The sturdy and beautiful virtues which make a church a people of the Lord receives his blessed sanction. But these do not blind those eyes of flaming fire to the fact of sin and imperfection. The fault must be reproofed. The sinner must be taught even tho it be with the brazen hell of affliction, that sin and unholiness is of the evil one and destroys the sinner. The church must learn that vice and sin endured without efforts looking to its remedy cannot be tolerated. And all must know that He who loved the church and bought it with his own precious blood is also He who ruled the nations with a rod of iron and breaks the peoples into shivers, as a potter the useless vessel.

And as we hear these messages should we not take courage and work with greater effort, knowing that Christ is the head of the church and watches over it and us with tender and careful solicitude? Shall we not learn to practice the virtues and shun the vices of this church? Shall we not make Christ's message to Thyatira, in so far as it applies to us, our own and be admonished? That such may be the result is our prayer. "He that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches."

A POPULAR DOCTRINE

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We are sometimes told that this and that doctrine of the sects is a popular doctrine, that it pleases the world, that it is regarded with complacency by the unconverted and the half converted, and boasts the largest following. A sentiment of this kind is usually the result of a limited outlook, the inability to see clearly and comprehensively over a wide field. For as a matter of fact no form of Christian doctrine, however broad it may appear in comparison with the orthodox and conservative, can be rightly regarded as popular, in the worldly sense, if the size of its following is to be the test of popularity. Even the most diluted systems of Christian truth are popular only in a limited sense, since any one of them, or even all of them taken together, are popular with a vast majority of the world's populations. But we have started out to discuss a doctrine, which if the devoted adherence of a whole nation, and that the greatest nation in the world is satisfactory proof of popularity, occupies the proudest eminence of favor and influence. It is not a part of any known system of theology, yet there are thousands, perhaps millions of people, who are ready to become its martyrs. It is not a religious doctrine, yet multitudes would willingly rush into the jaws of death with no other passport for eternity. So important is it thought to be that if it should be attacked, great armies would rush to its defense, mighty navies would engage in fierce battle for its vindication; and it is even regarded as a not improbable event that